

Message Text

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R 121435Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 807

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

USNATO BRUSSELS 452

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0317

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XH, BU, GR, RO

SUBJECT: BALKAN CONFERENCE -- BULGARIAN ROLE

REF: A) ATHENS 1184; B) ATHENS 1262

1. WE CAN CONTRIBUTE AN INTERESTING MINOR FOOTNOTE TO THE EXCELLENT REPORTS OF EMBASSY ATHENS ON THE BALKAN CONFERENCE. WE HAD NOT REPORTED THIS EARLIER BECAUSE WE AWAITED THOSE REPORTS, TO SEE WHAT COULD HAVE GIVEN RISE TO A RATHER SURPRISING BULGARIAN INITIATIVE.

2. ON JANUARY 30, FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV CONVOKED (SEPARATELY) THE AMBASSADORS OF ALL THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND TOLD THEM THAT IN THE BULGARIAN VIEW THE CONFERENCE WAS NOT EMPOWERED TO MAKE DECISIONS OR EVEN TO MAKE (JOINT) RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENTS: THE DELEGATES WERE THERE TO DISCUSS, AND TO REPORT THE DISCUSSIONS. PERIOD.

3. THIS, OF COURSE, WAS NOT NEW. IN FACT, MLADENOV
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MERELY EXPOUNDED THE GROUND RULES ON WHICH THE CONFERENCE

HAD BEEN CONVOKED IN THE FIRST PLACE; AND AS THE GREEK AMBASSADOR HERE ASSURED US, THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE WHATEVER BETWEEN MLADENOV'S POSITION AND THAT OF THE GREEKS.

4. THE QUESTION THEREFORE ARISES, WHY DID THE BULGARIANS FIND IT NECESSARY TO MAKE THESE DEMARCHES. ONE HYPOTHESIS IS THAT WHILE WHAT MLADENOV TOLD THE AMBASSADORS HERE WENT WITHOUT SAYING, IT IS GOOD DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE TO MAKE EVEN CLEARER WHAT IS CLEAR ALREADY.

5. WE THINK PARA 4 REF B CONTAINS THE MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION. PROBABLY MOSCOW BECAME WORRIED THAT THE BALKAN CONFERENCE MIGHT "GET OUT OF HAND" BY DEVELOPING A MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN; AND THERE SEEM TO BE SOME INDICATIONS THAT PERHAPS THE ROMANIANS WERE NOT DISINCLINED TO SEE THIS HAPPEN. (HOWEVER, IT COULD NOT REALLY HAVE HAPPENED BECAUSE THE BULGARIANS ALWAYS HAD THE CAPABILITY OF PREVENTING A CONSENSUS.)

6. AT ANY RATE, WE INTERPRET THE MLADENOV DEMARCHES AS DUE TO BULGARIAN FEARS THAT THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT FIND THEM NOT SUFFICIENTLY DILIGENT IN PREVENTING OFFICIAL OR QUASI-OFFICIAL DECISIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BEING MADE. QUITE POSSIBLY THE USSR PRODDED THE GOB TO MAKE ASSURANCE DOUBLY SURE. AND INDEED, THE BULGARIANS SHOWED ALL THE REQUIRED DILIGENCE.
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